NORTHEAST AFRICA SERIES
Vol. VII No. 3
(United Arab Republic)

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THE UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC TODAY

Part III: Egypt and the Arab World

by Charles F. Gallagher

Cairo
January 21, 1960

As President Nasser stood on the platform at Aswan for the inauguration of the High Dam this month, there was a good deal to be learned about the delicate subject of relations between the United Arab Republic and the rest of the Arab world, between Egypt itself and other Arab countries. Something was indicated by the Arab personalities who were at his side; something else could be inferred from the absence of those who were not.

The guest of honor was Muhammad V, King of Morocco, whose state visit to Egypt, as part of an extended periplus through the Arab Middle East, had been arranged to coincide with the start of work on Egypt's greatest economic project. The green-on-red starred flag of Morocco was flying throughout the republic, and every honor was pressed on the royal visitor, including the hospitable gesture of asking him to press the inaugural button with the President. Also flanking President Nasser was Shukri al Kuwatly, President of Syria at the time of the formation of the United Arab Republic who voluntarily stepped down to pave the way for Nasser's election as chief of state of the new united country. A dedicated Arab patriot for decades, Kuwatly has been raised to an honorific shelf as "First Arab Citizen," in thankfulness for his continued efforts on behalf of Arab unity.

[CFG-3-'60]

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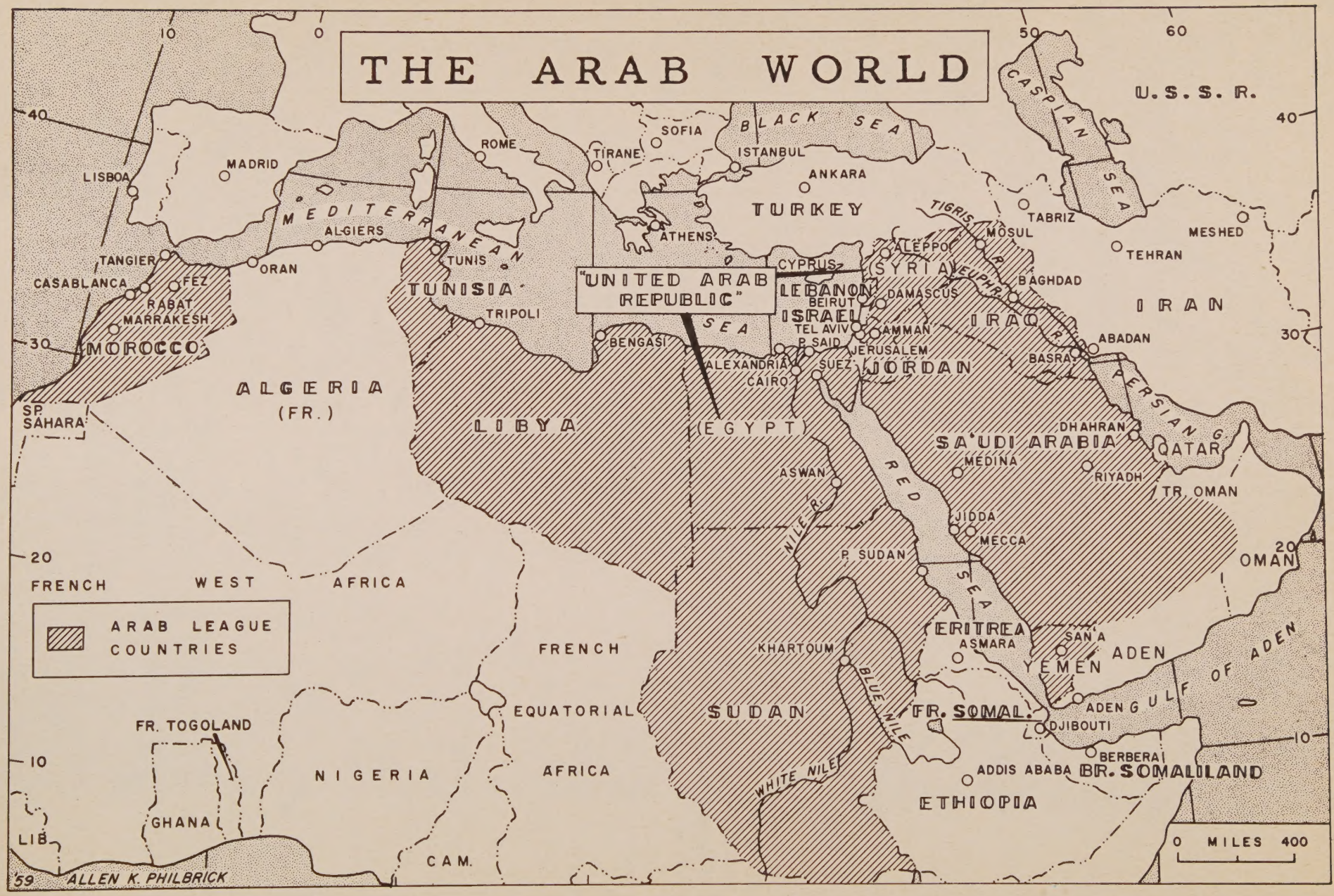
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There was stature in this accompaniment, which represented the head of the second most populous Arab state and the only Arab leader whose position was impeccably neutral enough within the Arab format to allow himself the luxury of traveling in the space of one month to Cairo, Amman, and Baghdad; it also signified Nasser's extraordinary accomplishment in having brought about the first union between two independent Arab countries. Despite its enemies' predictions of disaster and dissolution the merger of Egypt and Syria is still in force after two years.

Could the President have wished for more? Well, perhaps. There were several lacunae which surprised, even taking into account the near impossibility of having two state guests at one time. One might rule out special envoys from those countries which could not be expected to take notice of the event: Iraq above all; Tunisia, which has broken with the UAR and even boycotts the Arab League; and Jordan which is still on cool terms with the Nasser Government. But there might have been expected a sprinkling of visitors at foreign minister level or thereabouts from other Arab countries which are not now on such bad terms with the Cairo Government: Lebanon, Libya, and the Sudan, or even a special effort by the government of Yemen which is legally in federation with the United Arab Republic; not to speak of a greater effusion by congratulatory telegram from sister Arab states--if there were such they were mysteriously absent from the Cairo press. To be sure, newspapers in most Arab countries except those overtly hostile to Nasser, praised the accomplishment but, as Egyptians noted, so, too, did The New York Times which hardly ever has a bouquet for President Nasser.

In his speech résuméing the history of the struggle to get the dam under way, the President took great pains to describe the project as an all-Arab accomplishment, made possible by the exertions of Arab nationalism as a whole. It is a moot question, however, just to what degree this feeling is shared elsewhere, at least on an official level. Thereby hangs a tale--that of the role of Egypt, past and present, in the framework of Arab nationalism and inter-Arab politics; a role which gives many indications now of undergoing a new interpretation, even if the historical factors which have shaped it seem themselves to have changed little.

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These historical factors concern Egypt, Arab nationalism, and Islam. Each has had its own development and each, at times, has been identical with, intertwined with, or independent of the others. There is of course no space here for a résumé of the history of each,[1] but in order to understand the workings of the United Arab Republic today, one must at least make reference to some fundamental postulates.

1) Egypt has a history and an identity of its own. A good part of it was Pharaonic, a small part Alexandrine-Hellenistic, but the great bulk has

been Islamic and Arab. Nevertheless, the sense of a different past is very much alive in the consciousness of the Egyptian, despite Islamic apologists and the more extreme Arab nationalist writers who have from time to time claimed that only a void existed in Egypt before Islam. The monuments of ancient Egypt mean infinitely more to the Egyptian than do the ruins of Jerash, Baalbek, or Palmyra to the Fertile Crescent Arab, because he considers them an integral product of his historical lifestream. And the jealous attachment of the Egyptian to the land of Egypt, inhibiting migration, is too well known to need documentation, but contrasts sharply with the fluid geographical notions of most other Arabs.

2) The Arabs, using the term in the cultural sense of those who speak Arabic and feel they belong to the Arab community, have, despite their far-flung diversity and disunion, a strong sense of brotherhood, a feeling of underlying cultural unity, and the idea of a common spiritual homeland. The last may include all the territory from the Persian Gulf to the Atlantic, as it is now standard to contend, but the heart of the homeland centers in Arabia and the Fertile Crescent, whether it be arranged around the holy cities of Arabia and Iraq, the capitals of the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs--Damascus and Baghdad--or Jerusalem itself, the "second Mecca." Egypt, with Cairo having been a great Islamic center for centuries, is included in this homeland by the unanimous consent of all Arab intellectuals today, but Egypt is not the center in exactly the same way. One can feel it in the distinction made by many in calling Cairo the capital of Islam and Damascus the capital of Arabism.

3) The movements of history and geopolitics in the 19th century made the Mediterranean littoral of the heartland the principal focus of the Arab renaissance, at least in terms of materialistic modernization. (One cannot be nearly so sure about the spiritual renovation of Islam; movements such as Wahhabism in 18th-century Arabia, Mahdism in the Sudan, and the Sanussi in Cyrenaica, may have a great part to play in shaping future Islamic thought and they are all, characteristically, far from the shores of the Mediterranean.) The impact of the West was felt first in Egypt and Lebanon and it is even more true today that they are the doors through which externally-derived change filters into the Arab world, through such media as book publishing, the press, and the output of university intellectuals. Of the two Egypt is far more important, for after the first flame of revival in Lebanon in the latter half of the

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[1] Readers who wish to follow-up can find an excellent summary account of the modern history of Egypt in Egypt, by Tom Little, New York: Praeger, 1958. The best statement on Arab nationalism is that in The Ideas of Arab Nationalism, by Hazem Zaki Nuseibeh, Ithaca: Cornell, 1956. On Islam the list is endless, but most to be recommended are two works by H.A.R. Gibb: Mohammedanism, New York: New American Library, 1955, and Modern Trends in Islam, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1947. Taken together these would provide an excellent background.

19th century, its sectarian particularisms have tended to keep it somewhat apart from the mainstream of Arab politico-religious life.

Egypt, however, offered late in the last century a haven for many of the Arab nationalists of the Levant; it benefited from a relatively free press under British occupation and it was outside the direct struggle against the Ottomans but subsisted as a pole of attraction for Muslim-Arabs within the second sphere of their worlds. Thus, the anomaly occurred that the center of the Arab nationalist renaissance was transferred to Egypt and became well installed there by the beginning of this century, coexisting nebulously with what Nuseibeh[2] has called a "parochial Egyptian nationalism, separate from the general pan-Arab revival." As the best writers and thinkers of Arabdom congregated, produced, and published in Cairo from 1900 on, Egypt soon boasted that overwhelming intellectual predominance among the Arabs which it still maintains today.

The combination of these three points has caused a certain conflict among Arab thinkers. Those of Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Arabia itself retain a sense of aloofness from Egypt and arrogate to themselves a purity which they deny to their Cairo brothers. The Egyptian intellectual conversely tends to feel an inherent right of leadership, a supremacy which belongs to the cosmopolitan avant-garde. It is a sentiment not unlike that of the New Yorker toward the inhabitants of lesser cities in America, or of the Parisian toward all Europeans--he knows that he is in the center of things and he behaves with an unthinking self-assurance often bordering on smugness and arrogance. These are all, it must be repeated, cultural patterns in the Arab world, worked up in the past half-century or more and given a fairly definitive stamp by, to choose a convenient date, the end of World War I. They were not then in any essential way political.

A political context began to invade them, however, at around that time. A look at a historical map is instructive. Geographic Syria, that formless area of the Ottoman Empire now made up by Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine, was being greedily divided by the victorious powers after the war. The Sykes-Picot agreement had allotted parts of the Fertile Crescent to France and England, the rest of it to independent Arab states under their protection (they were even nameless then); the Zionists had plans for a greater Palestine, a name with which a Prime Minister of Egypt was said to be unfamiliar, in a story current in the 1930's. Hyperbole perhaps, but indicative, because in all the rearranging of frontiers and the establishment of artificial states and emirates in the post-1918 Arab world no one dreamed of tampering with the confines of Egypt. Egypt existed as a historical reality, quiet different from the shifting sands of the mandated areas set up in Greater Syria. Thus when it gained a nominal independence in 1922 it became a rock around which the other Arabs, insecure and leaderless, could rally even while looking

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[2] Nuseibeh, op. cit., p. 146.

down on it with a snobbism of blood which might be best equated for Americans with that felt by good New Englanders or the best families of Virginia for crass Manhattanites.

Egypt fulfilled this role during much of the interwar period. It was used as a model by the other Arab states as they came into being: in various legal and governmental reforms, in the drafting of constitutions, and in education where Egypt had been the first Arab country to use Arabic as a language of instruction in a modern curriculum. But there was little reciprocity in sentiment between Egypt and the rest of the Arabs at the time. If to them it was the leading, indeed the only functioning, modern, independent Arab state, and thus deserving of their admiration and imitation, Egyptians felt that this was as it should be--Egypt, umm ad dunya (mother of the world), looked askance at the bilad al barra (the outer countries), as it had always done.

The Egyptian nationalist attitude of that period reinforced normal Egyptian assumptions of superiority and separateness because its motivations were quite different from those impelling the Arabs of geographic Syria. For Egyptians the main goal since the 1880's had been that of ridding the country of the British occupier, whereas to all other Arabs it was the Turks and not the West, until the end of World War I, who were the villains. Another point of departure was the existence in Egypt of a foreign dynasty and court, made up of Turks, Levantines, Greeks and Armenians, Balkan outcasts, and a potpourri of non-Egyptian elements, fortified by a sharp class system which completely alienated the upper-class Egyptians of semiforeign blood from the fellahin who were under them. This was very different from the relative classlessness of the other Arabs of the Middle East and it tended further to internalize the Egyptian national liberation movement. In sum, Egyptian political life was dominated from the Arabi rebellion of 1882 to the revolution of 1952 by the need to rid the country both of the alien ruling clique and the foreign power which sustained it.

The interests of Egyptian nationalists and Arab nationalists began to coincide materially for the first time after 1918 when they were united in opposition to the occupying European imperialisms. Arab nationalists saw that the progress made by Egypt, culminating in the Anglo-Egyptian treaty of 1936 and Egypt's admission to the League of Nations the following year, was leading the way for advances in their own countries, and Egyptian politicians felt for the first time a common bond that could be useful for political maneuvering. In addition, the degradation of the situation in Palestine from the Arab viewpoint consolidated their approach. Increased Zionist immigration was deplored by Arab nationalists in greater Syria who claimed Palestine as part of the Arab homeland, and by Egyptians who saw in it a British scheme to preserve imperial control on their canal doorstep and thereby cut them off from the other Arab countries whom they were more and more beginning to look upon as allies.

With the eclipse of France and the defeat of its Vichyite forces in Syria and Lebanon in 1941, Britain became the sole dominant power everywhere in the Middle East. It focused Arab hostility on it alone, and the danger signals of a united Arab policy against it could have been seen in the Iraqi revolt of 1941, which might well have succeeded had the Germans been given more notice, and the difficulties it had with Egypt in the black days of 1942 when Rommel was at the gates of Alexandria. But Britain preferred "for reasons which have been explained but remain incomprehensible"[3] to become godfather to the Arab League formed at its urging in 1944-45. It seemed also to believe that its continuing influence in Egypt would allow it to dominate the other Arab states as well, and it helped to insure Egyptian predominance in the organization from the outset. This has been a recurring source of complaint from other Arab countries, regardless of their political complexion, in the ensuing 15 years, and it is undeniable that the League has been largely an instrument of Egyptian policy at most times, thus ironically helping to mobilize all the Arabs against England when Egyptian policy had become violently anti-British in the '50's. League headquarters were set in Cairo, its first secretary-general was an Egyptian who, although a dedicated Arab nationalist, was convinced that Arab unity could only take place under Egyptian leadership--something which it is safe to say has been a dominant element of Egyptian political thought at all times since the mid-'20's, whether under the monarchy or the revolutionary republic.

The other Arab states of the Middle East--Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen--were all independent by the end of World War II. But they were inexperienced and divided among themselves by dynastic quarrels, meaningless frontiers, and an absence of national sentiment (as opposed to pan-Arab sentiment) among most of their peoples. It was consequently fairly easy for Egypt to assume leadership of the League and manipulate the other members so as to safeguard its primacy. The cardinal rule of Farouk and his advisers from 1945 until the revolution in 1952 was not to permit any combination of other Arab dynasties which might endanger his own leadership, while simultaneously preparing the ground for unity, at some indefinite future date, with Egypt at the helm.

Egyptian helmsmanship was soon put to the test and found wanting. All Arabs looked to Egypt in 1947-48 when the Palestine crisis was maturing; it was Egypt which promised to lead the victorious Arab armies into Palestine in May 1948 and consummate the achievement of Arab freedom everywhere in the Middle East. When the campaign ended in disaster it was only a matter of time before the existing social and political order was shaken, primarily in Egypt which received the greatest share of the blame, but also in almost every other Arab country. Egypt lost face with the Arabs and with its own young nationalists, and the doom of the monarchy was sealed. As Nasser wrote at the time, the thoughts of the Egyptian officers fighting on the Palestine front

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[3] Little, op. cit., p. 176.

were back in Egypt; they were concerned with the corruption and decay which made the debacle inevitable.

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Thus by 1952 the main lines of the relations between Egypt and the other Arab states had been drawn for a generation past. Egypt considered it her right to lead the Arab world, militarily, morally, intellectually, and by seniority. This claim had been more or less openly accepted by the Arabs, in spite of some reservations, since 1945. The disgust that was felt by eager, young Egyptian nationalists toward their own ruling classes was shared by the same elements in every country in the Arab Middle East. And, since the Palestine fiasco, the Arabs had felt abandoned and leaderless. What was wanted was something to spark new hope and someone to arise as a new hero. It is not surprising then that the revolution of July 23 awakened a burst of enthusiasm everywhere among the Arabs, and that because of it the place of Egypt at their head became more pronounced.

The position of Egypt vis-à-vis the Arab world can be likened to that of France in Europe without overly straining the comparison. Egypt, like France, has been the centralized and heavily-populated country always in the cultural and intellectual forefront. Like the French in personal ways, too, the Egyptians are subtle, bright, and witty, quite willing to criticize themselves and their regimes with acerbity in a way which offends them when outsiders indulge in the same sport. And the same ambivalence of amour and distrust has often prevailed toward Egypt on the part of the Arabs as is shown to France by other Europeans; but, in another parallel, in spite of repeated Egyptian haughtiness and affront, there is a vast reservoir of Arab good will which comes to the surface, ready to forgive whenever the "mother of the world" smiles at her protégés.

To this seemingly indestructible emotional capital was added after 1952 the dynamic appeal of a revolution. The Egyptian revolution seemed to point the way to Arabs--as had the French revolution to Europeans in 1789--to a new future in which past humiliations would be exorcised, ancient glories restored, and economic progress and justice assured to all. So it was not that the Revolutionary Command Council, or Nasser, changed the bases of Egypto-Arab relations, but rather that they galvanized them onto a new level of frenetic, emulative activity. In so doing they shook Arab society everywhere and the reaction of the old-guard elite in most Arab countries was much more constrained than that of the masses. But almost everywhere the appeal was, in its own way, successful.

It is in three principal areas that Nasserite Egypt has influenced inter-Arab relations: in its purely revolutionary call; in Egyptian tendencies to expansion and unity, sometimes confused, and the Arab reaction to them; and in the place of Egypt as the Arab representative among the great powers of the world.

The revolutionary appeal has largely been misunderstood in the West. To an enormous number of Arabs Nasser represents an idealized leader of the kind they would project into existence in their own country (and so did in Iraq). Their fantasies may sometimes wish him into direct power over them (as in Syria), but in more sober moments, influenced by the realities of a national sentiment which has clearly grown in Arab countries in recent years as the collectively shared experience has produced a richer social fabric in each, most look about for a local facsimile who incarnates the ideal: someone who is bold, honest, God-fearing, straight-talking, et al--whatever attributes they invest him with.[4] The constant use in Arabic, whether in daily conversation or in political discourse, of the terms "brother" and "brethren," may provide a clue. Nasser is to them the model elder brother whom one seeks to grow up to be like, or whose replica one wants to find in one's own family. In other terms he is also the adolescent's hero who has permitted himself and gotten by with deeds of derring-do which the dreamer has not yet dared attempt. Thus each step of the revolution tended to be viewed with approval in this psychological light. Land reform is taken by other Arabs as a necessity for proving social honesty, arms purchases and the predominance of a military caste as a prelude to the reconquest of stolen rights, and industrialization as the redressment of social evils perpetrated by a wicked older generation of "pashas and beys" and exploited by foreigners. This may explain how to the revolutionary in other Arab countries, the Egyptian teacher, military attaché, or cultural exchange visitor often seemed to have come not to subvert or tyrannize, but to spread the truth and pass along the message of how every Arab country could do the same. This helps to explain too, the difference between the appreciation in many cases of the Egyptian regime by other Arab governments and by other Arab peoples. The latter in their enthusiasm are eager to sweep away rulers who cannot or will not do what they hear has been done in Egypt. The former sometimes see the necessity for keeping up with the Joneses but want to be sure they do the keeping themselves, but sometimes consider the contest too exhausting and try to minimize the revolutionary breath from the Nile by cutting all contacts.

On the second point, it is undeniable that the revolutionary regime has been afflicted at times with expansionist tendencies. In this it runs true to all similar regimes which consolidate the decayed strength of an ancient state with new self-respect and vigor, but it also is being faithful to Egyptian history from Thutmose III on down through Muhammad Ali in the 19th century. When it has been strong Egypt has, like China, tended to spill over into neighboring areas--the Levant or up the Nile. Qualifications should be made, however. The tendencies must be related to time, for they were clearly stronger in earlier years when, as in 1952-53, there were serious efforts made to bring about by trickery, bribery, and subversion, an Anschluss between Egypt and

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4 These are exactly the adjectives that have been used by local admirers to describe Muhammad V in Morocco, Bourguiba in Tunisia, and in the past year, in a surprising turn of events, Hussein in Jordan.

the Sudan (something which, it should be pointed out, many Egyptians still consider quite normal and desirable); and a few years later when something of the sort was indicated with regard to Libya. The tendencies must also be looked at in the special perspective of the overwhelming Arab quest for unity, because of which most Arabs feel strong urges to some kind of association, still undefined, while preserving varying degrees of patriotic emotion directed to their own nation-state. When President Nasser claimed, as he did at the High Dam ceremonies two weeks ago, that the project is a triumph for all Arabs, one cannot deny that a majority of them everywhere do feel this to be true, and it is likely that most other Arab leaders are willing to share also in whatever credit is attached, provided there is no political bill to pay later.

It is hard to draw an accurate line between this desire for oneness shared by all Arabs, including Egyptians, and the innate imperialism, often unconscious, which leads Egyptians of all stations and callings to assume a hegemony of quasi-divine right. Thus one is struck by the popular Egyptian indifference to the visit of the Moroccan ruler, as contrasted with the rousing reception given him in unabashedly pan-Arab Damascus. Officially he was given a red-carpet welcome of great style and warmth, but the crowds were meagre and many educated Egyptians asked me questions which showed an appalling ignorance of their sister Arab state. Thus, too, a remarkably bright woman sociologist in Cairo can say to me that "All Arabs seem to accept us as leaders; I don't know why but they do." And thus an Egyptian economist could casually remark, as if it were the answer to the complex socio-economic problems raised by union, that "the Syrians just have to do what we tell them now"; while a group of Egyptian officers were complaining one evening that "Syria is a loss to us; we have to support it and we get nothing out of it." These are not the imperialistic attitudes of the regime, they are the ingrained feelings of ordinary Egyptian intellectuals about their rank in the Arab constellation.

The third crucial area of Egypto-Arab interrelationships has been that in which Egypt has served as a proxy for all the Arabs. Conscious of their weakness and looking for a champion as well as a hero, the Arabs have been surprisingly willing by normal standards of national political behavior to efface themselves in favor of Egypt whenever dealing with the foreign world. This has been especially true since 1945 up to the past few years, but there are now the strongest signs, of which Iraq and the North African countries are the most notable, that this period is coming to an end. But while it lasted it was important in giving the West a false idea of Egyptian power for evil (influence there was but never the kind of physical power which so many uninformed editorials credited to the Nasser regime), and in misleading those in power in Egypt to some extent into believing that they commanded forever the unwavering allegiance of all Arabs. The heyday of this mood was the period between Bandung and Suez, when in Arab eyes it was revolutionary Egypt which by shrewd financial arrangements, radio appeals of rhetorical impressiveness, and heroic defiance of the Western powers, was bringing honor and recognition to the Arabs.

A trend is seldom seen by foreign observers, however, until it is already démodé. When the West, having failed at Suez, had just given up hope of diminishing Nasserite influence in the other Arab countries they already had begun to see it in a new light. The Arabs had been the victims of their own vivid imagination for in surrendering so much so voluntarily to the new dynamism of Cairo they had erected an out-of-size figure which was now beginning to conflict with their own steadily emergent national personalities. The excessive charisma of Nasser and his revolution by 1957-58 was clashing with the first precise formulations of progressive patterns in almost every Arab state, and it continues to do so. This is not dealing with the simple, overt clash between leaders--such as that between Nasser and Hussein in the spring of 1957, or the fright that took possession of the Saudi ruling house a bit later (it was actually given birth to by an earlier visit of Nasser before Suez, during which he turned out to be infinitely more popular than King Saud himself). Rather that it seemed to the young nationalists of the newer generation in half a dozen Arab countries that, instead of an ideal to be grafted onto their own delicate plant, Nasserism was about to become an all-invading parasite which might destroy them, too. The most telling example of this change in thought was to be provided later by the Iraqi revolution, but the same thing in a more subdued way was going on among many young Libyans before this, mature second-thoughts had entered the heads of many pro-Egyptian elements in Lebanon, and a goodly number of Jordanians, as violent a group of "angry young men" as one could wish for, had started thinking of their problems in more home-grown terms.[5]

Paradoxical as it may seem, this has every chance of becoming the true victory of the Egyptian revolution, for it is only by a transference of its spirit rather than its body, with ample allowance for local adaptation, that it can hope to succeed in effecting a genuine transformation in other Arab countries, and ultimately to achieve that unity which remains a compelling Arab goal. As can be imagined this has not been a victory, so far, to be won lightly, for the combined pressures of Egyptian cultural patterns-cum-history, and the activist temperament of the men guiding revolutionary Egypt were against the kind of relaxation necessary--and much more of it will continue to be necessary--to an inter-Arab accommodation on this new basis. But a good deal of credit should be given to those who are seeing it through for it has involved a renunciation altogether uncommon in Arab behavior, political or otherwise. If Egyptian relations with the West were easy in the post-Suez period, in the sense of requiring only an elementary technique of putting together the broken pieces, relations with the other Arab states were psychologically formidable, necessitating the letting-go of fragments which had been momentarily hammered together into a mold in such a way that, whatever its outward appearance, it would not long have held together.

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[5] This development of the "Jordanian" personality, embracing for the first time many Palestinians, is one of the most interesting phenomena observable in the Middle East. I hope to comment on it further in a coming report.

The year 1958 was seemingly the turning point and one suspects that the Syrian experience has been crucial. Lest we forget, the beginning of that year found Cairo at violent odds with prerevolutionary Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, and Tunisia; the governments of Sudan and Libya were officially indifferent to the Egyptian blandishments, and Morocco was for practical political purposes still in outer space. The revolutionary calls for purification and renaissance were being directed at all hostile regimes and were finding an appreciable audience among their subjects. Both Lebanon and Iraq underwent revolutions a few months later in which Egyptian ideas (we are not speaking here of Egyptian propaganda, as such) played parts, more so in the latter case; and Jordan faced one plot after another among its army officers, students, and the mass of its dissatisfied west-bank Palestinians.

When Syria, in contrast to them, flung itself almost hysterically into Nasserite arms in February, the first and typical Egyptian reaction was to move in administratively, militarily, and economically in an attempt to make Syria over into a little Egypt. After a few months the results were upsetting enough to cause the more alert Egyptian officials dealing with the Northern Region to revise their plans. Syria was not Egypt, either in ethos, spirit, trade patterns, standard of living, individual temperament, food, dress, or any of those intimate life habits which make peoples distinctive--even, in this case, within the strong emotional bonds of Arabism. And as Egyptians learned this with a shcok they may be said to have learned something about the Arab world for the first time in their modern history. The recent appointment of Marshal Abdel Hakim Amer as governor of Syria, empowered to relax or rescind many of the hastily-imposed controls of the first period of unification, indicates that Nasser continues to learn (he spent several months in Syria last year trying to put things in order), and contains the best hope for stability and permanence in the union.

The revolutions in Iraq and Lebanon later in 1958 provided further surprises for many Egyptians. In the two countries nationalist elements succeeded in ousting governments which they had considered too Western-oriented or -dominated, but having done so they did not rush to embrace the United Arab Republic as many, both Westerners and Egyptians, had mistakenly assumed they would. The lesson was plain that at this stage of Arab nationalism there has been too great a coalescence of internal community of interest within each nation-state, without a corresponding growth of solid pan-Arab sentiment in quantity sufficient to match it. Of course, there were special factors in both cases: Lebanon is the most individualist country in the Arab Middle East on confessional grounds; and Iraq, the first of the Fertile Crescent states to become free in 1932, is buoyed by a local nationalism which has deep roots in Mesopotamia as a historic center of civilization equal to that of the Nile. Furthermore, the standard of living in Lebanon and the prospects for development with oil monies in Iraq were mighty economic supports to those nationalists who prefer to stay single and wait and see.

But it is likely that contributing factors could be found in any single country in the Arab world if its nationalists start looking for them. The most salient point to be made about the Arab nationalism of today, as compared to that of a generation ago, is that the various Arab states, although coming together in many fields of endeavor through mutual co-operation, are not becoming more alike but on the contrary more distinct. Given the development of particularist political and social norms with differing economic emphases, with all that implies in the formation of organic societies as unique as individuals, this is what we should expect theoretically. And a mere tourist who had read descriptions of Beirut, Damascus, Amman, and Baghdad written 30 years ago, and then visits them today, could confirm this empirically.[6]

It is still too early to judge how Egypt will make use of the knowledge it is beginning to glean about the complexities of Arab nationalism in 1960. One first result has been, as we have seen, a slackening of Egyptian missionary efforts, not only to make Syria over, but a seeming willingness to come to terms with other kinds of Arabism in other Arab countries. The détente of sorts between Egypt and Jordan is one example, and the renewed cordiality without closeness between the United Arab Republic on the one hand, Saudi Arabia and Sudan on the other, is a second. The projected voyage of President Nasser to Morocco this September will be a precious indication of many things in the shape of future Arab relations. (Although Nasser has been to Bandung, Yugoslavia, and Moscow, he has never traveled to another independent Arab state, apart from his brief trip to Saudi Arabia; this was mainly because of the dread among other Arab rulers that his popularity would tarnish theirs, but Muhammad V is clearly not worried about this now.) The continuing attacks on Iraq as a "Communist puppet" confirm this indirectly, too, for Cairo seems preoccupied these days with putting out the permissive line of "other roads to Arabism"--provided they are true paths and not merely a camouflage for foreign, un-Arab doctrines.

Lastly, one must speculate upon the coincidence between the Egyptian disillusionment, if one may use the word, with its previous energetic approach to Arab problems, and the new concern of the Government for the economic development of the republic. The anticolonialist, antifeudalist slogans of yesteryear still echo from the Cairo press and broadcasting complex, but they are muted in comparison to the new word of order, which is "Double the standard of living within ten years." Industrialization, production, technical advancement are the keywords behind which the new attitude of co-operation with all on a basis of equality is proclaimed. As with the decision to build socialism in one country, may not the Egyptian Government now be thinking in terms of

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[6] This agrees completely with the comments made by a colleague of mine on a related subject. Cf. K. H. Silvert, Nationalism and the Role of Elites in Latin America (KHS-1-'59), an AUFS publication. Students of comparative nationalism might find much of interest as the countries of Latin America and the Arab world develop in the coming years.

making the United Arab Republic a model of modern, technological progress which will automatically attract the other Arab countries in the future, possibly within some looser political structure than the total union which extremists have plumped for in the past? As the leaders of the UAR watch the connection between the growth of economic power in Western Europe and the development of European unity, it cannot be thought that the lesson is entirely lost upon them.

Thus today Egypt stands at a crossroads in its relations with the rest of Arabdom. One path might lead off to a revival of Egyptian nationalism, with Pharaonic overtones, in a decade or so; another could point to a withdrawal into isolationism, if the Syrian union should end in failure; and a third could be the beginning of a new and fruitful construction of pan-Arab co-operation with more internal equilibrium than has hitherto been evident.

Whatever course events take there is one point that needs stressing. The future of Egypt is vital to a good many countries--to the East and the West, to the great powers, to the maritime nations, and to many of the emergent nations of Africa and Asia. It is even more so to the rest of the Arab countries, and whatever the problems and crises that the Arabs face in coming years we would do well to look to Egypt for the keys that will help us understand them. For although Egypt will remain unique in many ways, it will also remain part and parcel of the Arab community and, while it is possible with difficulty to imagine the future of Egypt without the other Arab countries, it is quite impossible to conceive of them without Egypt.

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